

## **Application: Law Enforcement FY 2012**

### **Law Enforcement Needs for Grants and Cooperative Agreements Program - 2010/2011**

#### **Agency: BLM - Palm Springs South Coast Field Office**

#### **ITEM 1. Proposed Project**

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Palm Springs- South Coast Field Office (PSSC FO) manages approximately 1.65 million acres of public land, extending from the Colorado River to the Pacific Ocean, and south to the Mexican border. Law Enforcement Officers are responsible for public safety and protection of natural resources across five distinctively different areas of Southern California: Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert, South Coast, California Desert Conservation Area, Santa Rosa and the San Jacinto Mountains National Monument. Public lands in the PSSCFO management area lie within California's most densely populated urban areas, including Riverside, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange and San Diego counties. The PSSC FO is situated between two BLM field offices that manage large open OHV recreation areas including Johnson Valley, Dumont Dunes, and Imperial Sand Dunes. An estimated 96,000 off-road vehicles are registered in Riverside County alone, ranking it the third highest in the state. An additional 150,000 off-road vehicles are registered in the surrounding counties. The field office provides an estimated 1.005 million acres of riding area and over 1,500 miles of designated OHV trails. RIMS data indicates that 1,101,953 recreation visitors use 1,500 miles of designated routes on 1,005,228 acres of public lands within the Palm Springs Field Office jurisdiction.

The PSSC FO has established the Meccacopia Special Recreation Area east of Indio for OHV recreational riding and travel in the diverse terrain around the Mecca Hills and Orocopia Mountains. Other important travel destinations are the Corn Springs Camping Area, Red Cloud, Drop 31, touring opportunities along the Bradshaw Trail and other areas.

Urban expansion is continually encroaching into remaining open spaces. Due to accelerated population growth and expanding community development in Southern California, public lands, which form the basis for much of the remaining open space in the region, have become the primary source for a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities. While the vast majority of OHV riders are responsible in their actions, the high demand for off-road recreational areas in this region has led to an increase in irresponsible OHV use. The need for enforcement of laws and regulations, as well as for public education and public assistance during weekends and holidays, continues to increase, putting a serious burden on the PSSC FO Law Enforcement program. Recognizing the increase in recreational OHV use and the associated needs to provide public assistance, enforcement, and education, patrol staff was recently increased from five to nine law enforcement officers. This will help increase public contact and compliance, assistance and educational opportunities in the areas impacted by heavy OHV use.

The goal of the PSSC FO Law Enforcement Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) program is to increase BLM presence in recreational areas throughout the Field Office jurisdiction, while promoting

safe and legal OHV recreational use on public lands. Through close coordination and partnerships with other local law enforcement agencies and the Coachella Valley Association of Governments (CVAG) OHV Task Force, and through development of outreach and educational programs, PSSC FO Law Enforcement continues to enhance OHV safety and compliance on public lands. If successful, additional funding made available through the OHMVR grant will allow the Law Enforcement Program to:

1. reduce OHV encroachment into wilderness, closed areas, and private property. Palm Springs Rangers routinely conduct wilderness checks, and patrol the boundaries of closed areas such as Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC), Preserves, Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA), and private property;
2. protect natural resources from damage or reduce damage of natural resources through proactive law enforcement and education outreach efforts, and enable us to patrol the five highly diverse areas within the Palm Springs Field Office on a more frequent basis;
3. reduce OHV state and federal law violations, and increase regulation awareness within the Palm Springs Field Office's jurisdiction;
4. provide additional patrols along the California side of the Colorado River Corridor on lands administered by the Arizona BLM. This includes sensitive cultural areas such as the Blythe Intaglios and the Big Maria Mountains wilderness boundaries.

## **ITEM 2. Project Coverage**

BLM PSSC FO Law Enforcement Officers patrol 1.65 million acres of public lands extending from the Colorado River to the Pacific Ocean and south to the Mexican border. These public lands are adjacent to California's most densely populated urban areas and include BLM-managed lands in Riverside County, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, Orange, and San Diego counties. The PSSC FO also provides assistance with patrols along the Colorado River Corridor on lands administered by the Arizona BLM.

## **ITEM 3. Describe the frequency of the patrols**

Protection of the natural resources on public lands is one of the primary functions of the BLM law enforcement program. Due to the extensive damage that can be caused by irresponsible OHV use, management of legal and illegal riding has become one of the main priorities for the field office. To provide adequate law enforcement coverage, rangers are scheduled to work four ten-hour days. Rangers are scheduled to provide coverage seven days a week, working Monday through Sunday. This provides continual coverage and public assistance. In general, approximately eighty percent of a Ranger's patrol time is spent dealing with OHV issues.

#### **ITEM 4. Deployment of Personnel**

The PSSC FO's Law Enforcement Program is currently staffed with 9 Rangers and one vacant position. All Rangers are tasked with performing OHV responsibilities as part of their regular duties. Successful funding from the OHMVR division will allow time for additional patrol of wilderness boundaries and cultural sites, and for public contact in high use areas in vehicles and on ATV's.